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GREAT ARTISTS

BOOK 2

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Caprese
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Leonardo da Vinci
Birthplace : near Florence
Main place of work : Milan
Elba
CORSICA
Rome
SARDINIA
Michelangelo
Birthplace : Caprese
Main place of work : Rome
MEDITERRANEAN

AUSTRIA
ITALY
SLOVENIA
Trieste
YUGOSLAVIA
Raphael
Birthplace : Urbino
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Series 701

The pleasure of a visit to an art gallery can be greatly enhanced when one knows something of the background to the lives and characters of the great artists, and how their work was influenced by their environment.

This second book in the series deals with the lives of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael and many of the splendid full-colour illustrations show these artists at work on their well known masterpieces.

Children and adults alike will delight in this excellently produced book.

Artists in this book:

LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519)

MICHELANGELO (1475-1564)

RAPHAEL (1483-1520)

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GREAT ARTISTS

by DOROTHY AITCHISON

with illustrations by MARTIN AITCHISON

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Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519)

Leonardo da Vinci was born near Florence in 1452. He was one of the great artists of the Italian Renaissance – the great revival of interest in learning, literature and the arts, which took place between 1300 and 1500, and when cultured people became interested in ancient Greek architecture and sculpture.

Florence was one of the richest of the many Italian republics and City States, and was dominated by the powerful Medici family who were generous patrons of the Arts. At that time many fine artists and craftsmen worked in the city. Three of the greatest artists of all time were working there in the early part of the sixteenth century, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael.

Leonardo da Vinci was the son of a notary, or lawyer, and his mother was a peasant girl. As a boy, Leonardo had a great interest in nature and often neglected his studies to roam the countryside. He made careful drawings of all the things he saw.

One day, a peasant asked Leonardo's father if he would take a wooden shield to Florence to be painted with a design. The notary thought his son could do this and gave the panel to him. Leonardo decided to paint a fabulous monster, belching fire and poison. To serve as models he collected newts, moths, snakes, maggots, bats and locusts. Later, when his father came to the darkened room, which smelt overpoweringly of the decaying creatures, he was terrified by the picture on the shield, and the collection of specimens. However, after recovering from his fright he realised that his son had great ability – and that it should be encouraged.

Leonardo's father gets a shock.

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In 1466 Leonardo's family moved to Florence, and he went to work in the studio of the artist Verrocchio. Andrea Verrocchio was a skilled teacher. He had originally been a goldsmith, and was about thirty years of age when Leonardo came to his workshop. He had other pupils who became famous, including Botticelli and Perugino. Leonardo served a six year apprenticeship with Verrocchio, and learned to work in silver and bronze, as well as how to draw and paint.

The first painting of Leonardo's that we know about appears in Verrocchio's painting of the *Baptism of Christ*. He painted an angel on the left-hand side of the picture. Leonardo's angel is much softer and more graceful than Verrocchio's figures and is painted in oils – then a new technique imported from the Netherlands. The rest of the picture is in tempera. We are told that Verrocchio was so astonished by his pupil's skill that he gave up painting completely, and confined himself to sculpture. Leonardo was fond of his master, and his work was not influenced by any other painter. He continued to live in Verrocchio's house, even when his apprenticeship was finished.

In 1472, Leonardo joined the Guild of St. Luke (a guild of painters), and his father rented a studio for him. At this time he was a handsome young man, tall and slender, and his golden hair was always carefully dressed and curled. Leonardo was rather a solitary person; he had an enquiring mind and spent much time in study. He was deeply interested in mathematics and geography, and in every aspect of the natural world.

Verrocchio is impressed with Leonardo's painting of an angel.

Leonardo did not settle down in Florence to become a successful painter. He was given a few commissions but did not receive the encouragement from the Medici family which Michelangelo was to enjoy. In 1481 he began an altarpiece of the '*Adoration of the Magi*' for the monks of St. Donato. This work was full of new ideas but was never carried out in colour.

Lorenzo de Medici assisted Leonardo by giving him a letter of introduction to the Duke of Milan, Ludovico il Moro. Leonardo went there in 1482, taking with him a silver lyre which he had made in the shape of a horse's skull. He realised that Ludovico was much involved in wars, and before he went, wrote a long letter describing his skill as a military engineer. He listed his designs for bridges, mortars and other war machines, and told of his plans for undermining fortifications.

The Court of Milan was rich and powerful, but was not famous for encouraging artists. Leonardo was welcomed more as a musician and an organiser of festivals than as a painter. Leonardo tried to interest the Duke in many schemes. Plague had killed off a third of the population of Milan, and Leonardo had astonishingly modern ideas about town planning. He put forward designs for satellite towns to spread out the citizens and prevent disease. He planned rapidly-moving canals to assist sanitation and refuse disposal. He even thought of two-level streets, such as architects are designing for our congested cities today.

Leonardo tries to interest the Duke of Milan in his inventions.

In Milan, Leonardo would have welcomed commissions for painting, but was more appreciated as a witty practical-joker and as a stage-designer than as a great artist. He painted some portraits and a few Madonnas, and began the famous '*Madonna of the Rocks*' which is in the National Gallery in London. He was a man of so many talents that he found it difficult to finish any of his works before moving on to the next, and there are less than twenty paintings by Leonardo da Vinci in existence today.

During his time at Ludovico's court, Leonardo did work on two projects which were to make him famous throughout Italy, although the first was never completed.

Ludovico planned to set up a great equestrian statue of his ancestor, Francisco Sforza, and ninety tons of bronze were laboriously collected. A workshop was set up in the palace and Leonardo set to work. He made many studies of prancing and galloping horses, and studied their bones and muscles in great detail. He gave much thought to the problems of casting the horse in bronze, and planned to have four furnaces pouring molten metal at the same time.

In 1493 Leonardo's clay model was displayed in front of the palace, and news of his achievement spread throughout Italy. Unfortunately for Leonardo, Ludovico was engaged in wars with the French, and the precious bronze was taken to the foundry for manufacture into cannon. The clay model was later destroyed by French archers, who used it for shooting practice.

French archers use Leonardo's clay model for target practice.

Leonardo was saddened by the loss of his bronze, and troubled by lack of money. His own needs were few, as he was a vegetarian and drank little wine, but he had to pay his assistants. However, between the years 1495 and 1497, he painted the famous '*Last Supper*', which was to make him a leader of Italian painting.

'*The Last Supper*' was commissioned by the Dominican Priory of Santa Maria and painted on a wall thirty feet long and fourteen feet high. When completed it became the most famous picture of the Christian world and the King of France wanted to transport it back to France, wall and all. Unfortunately, the wall was badly built, and Leonardo experimented with oil tempera instead of following the usual fresco method of working on wet plaster. As a result, the picture is today in an extremely bad condition.

Leonardo made many searching studies of the Disciples, grouping them in the painting with great care. To find a suitably villainous face for Judas Iscariot, he combed the streets of Milan's criminal quarter. The Prior of the monastery kept urging Leonardo to complete the work, and complained to the Duke that Leonardo stared at the picture half the day. Leonardo explained that painting was not like digging the garden, and that he was finding it difficult to make Judas look sufficiently evil. He suggested that he might make the Prior his model, which made the Duke laugh. Leonardo was then allowed to continue his work in peace!

Leonardo suggests that he uses the Prior as a model for Judas Iscariot in his painting of 'The Last Supper'.

Leonardo had been deeply interested in Nature since his childhood. He left about seven thousand sheets of careful notes, which are beautifully illustrated. He was left-handed, and wrote in rather crabbed mirror-writing, so that his work is not easy to decipher.

He also studied the human body with a thoroughness unheard-of five hundred years ago. He dissected about thirty corpses, exploring the workings of the muscles and the circulation of the blood.

Another of Leonardo's great passions was flight. He bought birds in the market place, and freed them so that he could study the movement of their wings. He filled eighteen folios with notes on the flight of birds.

Leonardo has left us many beautiful botanical drawings. His drawings of plants and trees are not dull diagrams, but living studies of both scientific and artistic interest. He also became a skilled map-maker and was fascinated by the stars. He calculated the size of the sun and moon. Actually, his conclusions were inaccurate, but this is hardly surprising when one remembers that he made his calculations over four hundred years ago.

Leonardo was fond of jokes and would lighten his serious studies with inventions to amuse his friends. Once he had a dead lizard and dipped it in quicksilver. He fixed on scales from other lizards, added horns and a beard, and kept the creature in a box to scare his companions.

Leonardo buys birds in the market place and releases them to study their flight.

Leonardo's restless mind was constantly busy with new inventions, in fact he is considered one of the greatest inventors of all time. He designed many weapons, catapults, scaling ladders and bridges, but had little opportunity to show his skill as a military engineer. Water fascinated him and he planned canals, and is believed to have invented the mitre lock-gate which is still used today. He also made an alarm clock which was worked by water.

After the fall of Milan, Leonardo went to Venice; he worked on schemes for sea defences for the Venetians who were in danger of invasion by the Turks. He designed diving suits, and water-shoes which were very much like our modern swimming flippers. He had plans for mine-ships, and a device for boring holes in the bottom of ships. Leonardo had a sure grasp of essentials, but lacked the perseverance which drives inventors to overcome all difficulties and perfect their devices.

Leonardo's study of flight led to many experiments, and he correctly prophesied that men would fly. He made a model of a flying machine with wings of wood, thin cloth and feathers. Legend tells us that his pupil Zoroaste de Peretolo took off with it from a hill near Florence, only to crash and break his leg.

Leonardo realised that man would need mechanical aid to fly, and designed an air-gyroscope and a helicopter. He even foresaw the parachute; his was a prism shaped tent with a wooden frame covered in air-proofed cloth.

 Leonardo's pupil crashes in a flying machine.

In 1500 Leonardo returned to Florence after an absence of twenty years. He was now forty-eight years old, and famous. He dressed fashionably and kept servants and horses. It was during this stay that Leonardo painted his last great pictures. His cartoon for the painting of the '*Virgin and St. Anne*' was much admired by the Florentines, but the finished picture was only completed much later. At this time, Leonardo came into contact with Michelangelo, then a rising young artist only twenty-nine years of age. They were commissioned together to paint walls of the new council chamber in the Palazzo Vecchio, or Town Hall. We shall read of this in the story of Michelangelo.

During his last stay in Florence, Leonardo painted his best known picture, the '*Mona Lisa*'. This is perhaps the most famous portrait of all time. It has inspired many legends and stories and was even the subject of an opera. '*Mona Lisa*', which is also called '*La Gioconda*', or '*The Smiling Woman*', is the portrait of the wife of an elderly nobleman, Francisco del Giocondo. She is not finely dressed, as were most Florentine ladies when they sat for their portraits. She wears a simple, dark robe, her hair is veiled, and she is posed against a mysterious background of mountains. What captures our imagination is her faint, enigmatic smile. We are told that Leonardo engaged musicians and jesters to keep her amused as he painted. Leonardo kept this picture until he died.

Leonardo paints the 'Mona Lisa'—with musicians and jesters to keep his subject amused.

In 1506, Leonardo was invited back to Milan to become Court Painter and Engineer to King Louis XII of France, who now ruled over the state. The Florentine people allowed him to go, but he was obliged to leave a deposit of money, as he had not finished his picture in the council chamber.

Whilst he was in the service of the French king, Leonardo was in Rome for three years from 1513. He never received any commissions from the Pope, but lived for a while in the Vatican. At this time, Michelangelo had just finished his great frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, and Raphael was at the height of his powers.

Leonardo was now more than sixty years of age, and in 1516 he left Rome and went a very long way away to France. The new French king, Francois I, allowed him to live in a small chateau at Amboise, in the Loire Valley. Leonardo took with him a Milanese artist named Melzi, to be his faithful companion.

Leonardo was greatly respected, and the King often visited him. Once again he designed a wedding festival, this time for Francois' niece.

Leonardo became ill in 1518, and his right arm was paralysed. He made plans for his funeral, asking that sixty poor men should carry torches in procession, and he bequeathed his work to Melzi. Leonardo was buried, far from home, in the Church of St. Florentin at Amboise.

The funeral of Leonardo at Amboise.

Michelangelo (1475-1564)

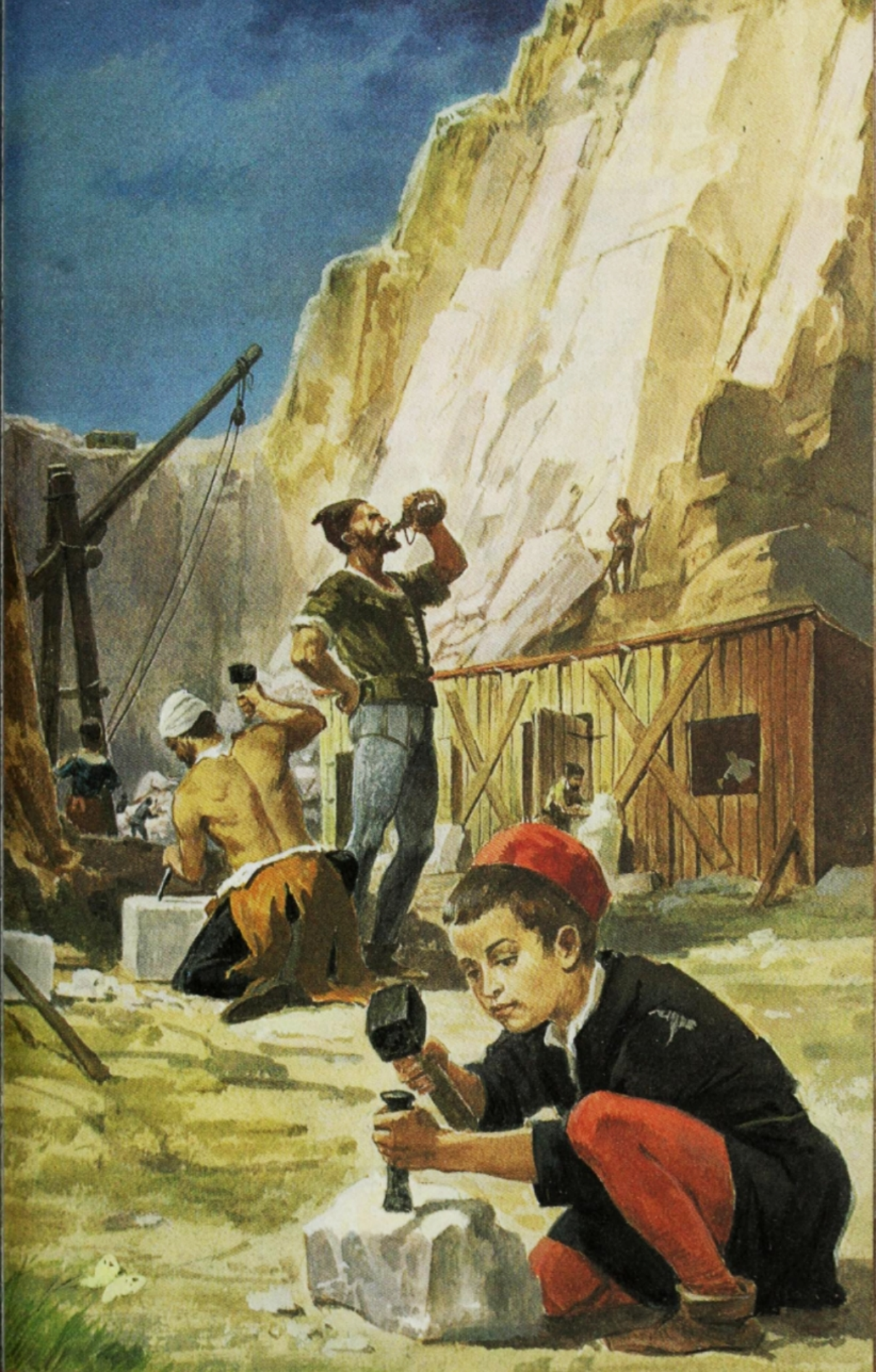
Michelangelo was born at Caprese, about forty miles from Florence, in 1475. His father, Ludovico, was a magistrate and proud of his noble ancestry. The family returned to Florence shortly after the child was born and Michelangelo was placed in the care of a foster mother at Settignano, just outside the city. Settignano was a town of stone quarries, and the boy who was destined to become the greatest sculptor of all time grew up with hammers and chisels as his first playthings.

Michelangelo's mother died when he was six, and his father remarried. Michelangelo went to live in Florence with his four brothers. He attended the grammar school but was not a very attentive pupil. He was determined to become a sculptor, but his father thought this was not a worthy profession for the son of a noble house, and Michelangelo was scolded and beaten for drawing in secret. His father was finally forced to recognise that the boy was determined to become an artist, and sought advice from his friends.

Michelangelo had meanwhile become friendly with a young painter named Francesco Granacci, who was apprenticed to the Ghirlandaio brothers, and in 1488 Michelangelo went to work in their studio.

It was not long before Michelangelo's great ability was recognised. He made a drawing of the scaffolding on which the young apprentices worked, and Domenico Ghirlandaio was forced to admit that the thirteen year old boy knew more than he did.

The young Michelangelo plays in the corner of a stone quarry.



Michelangelo stayed with the Ghirlandaio brothers for a year, until Lorenzo de Medici (Lorenzo the Magnificent), who ruled the State of Florence, decided to open a school for sculptors. He told Michelangelo's father that he would care for the boy as if he were one of his own children. So Michelangelo went to live in the Medici Palace, and was paid five ducats a month. Lorenzo had a garden full of antique statues, and Michelangelo was given a key to the garden so that he could study them. When he heard of this honour, Michelangelo's father realised that the boy was in favour, sent him new clothes and became more interested in his career as a sculptor.

About this time came the first signs of Michelangelo's quarrelsome nature. He was involved in a fight with a clever young sculptor named Torrignano, who was jealous of Michelangelo's ability. Torrignano struck Michelangelo and broke his nose, so that he was disfigured for life. Torrignano was forced to leave the city.

Michelangelo's progress was sadly disturbed by the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1492. His only commission from Lorenzo's successor was to make a statue out of snow, a snowman. In 1494, the Medici family fell from power, and Michelangelo left Florence. He travelled in Italy for some time and, after a brief return to his native city, then went to Rome. Michelangelo was then twenty-one years of age.

In Rome, Michelangelo's fame was soon established by his wonderful *Pietà*, a sculpture of Mary with the dead Christ, which is in St. Peter's. One day Michelangelo heard some visitors say that the sculpture was the work of a Milanese artist, so he promptly took up his chisels and carved his name on the Madonna's girdle.

 Michelangelo fights with the jealous Torrignano.

In 1501, Michelangelo returned to Florence and carved another statue which added to his growing reputation. His famous figure of '*David*' was sculpted from a block of marble which had been lying for a hundred years in a courtyard near the cathedral. The statue weighed 18,000 lbs., and to transport it to the Palazzo Vecchio it had to be hung in a wooden framework. The short journey took three days. When it was in position, the Gonfalonier, or Mayor, told Michelangelo that the nose of the statue was too thick. Michelangelo climbed the scaffold and pretended to chisel round the nose, at the same time letting fall a little marble dust he had concealed in his hand. Although the statue was unaltered, the Mayor told him that it was much improved!

It was at this time that Michelangelo was commissioned, with Leonardo da Vinci, to decorate the walls of the new council chamber of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. He made a fine cartoon (original sketch) of the '*Battle of Cascina*', which showed soldiers bathing in the River Arno. Leonardo began a great picture of the '*Battle of Anghiari*', full of prancing horses. Neither of the artists completed his work; Michelangelo's cartoon was later cut up, and Leonardo used an untried method of painting on his wall. When the paint would not dry, he lit a great fire which dried the lower part, but made the colours run hopelessly at the top. We know of these works today only through copies made by other artists.

 Michelangelo pretends to alter the nose of his 'David'.

In 1505, Michelangelo was called back to Rome by the great soldier-Pope, Julius II, who planned to build a cathedral on the site of the early Christian church of St. Peter and to have his own tomb in it.

Michelangelo spent eight months at Carrara, selecting marble for the tomb and preparing a studio in the square near the cathedral. Meanwhile the Pope was having second thoughts; he refused to pay Michelangelo for the marble and said that he was too busy to see him. Michelangelo had already engaged workmen, and thieves were stealing the stone from the courtyard, so in a rage he left Rome and went back to Florence.

The story of Julius' tomb was a long and bitter one for Michelangelo. He had five contracts in all for the work, and it was not completed until 1545. Even then, the first grand design was greatly reduced and the tomb was finally erected in a smaller church. No wonder poor Michelangelo said "In bondage to this tomb I saw my whole youth wasted." This was not quite true, as the finished mausoleum contains his figure of Moses, which is one of the world's greatest pieces of sculpture. It is said that when this figure was completed, Michelangelo stood back and said to it, "Why don't you speak?" – and then angrily struck it with his hammer. The mark on the right knee can be seen to this day.

The great sculpture of 'Moses'—and the tomb of Pope Julius on which it was finally placed.

Michelangelo wanted to finish his picture in the Palazzo Vecchio, and make a companion statue to his 'David,' but Pope Julius II had other plans for him. He was summoned to Rome in 1508 to decorate the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

This was a tremendous undertaking which Michelangelo did not welcome, and he set to work reluctantly. He engaged five assistants, but soon dismissed them and worked alone in acute discomfort for more than four years. To paint the ceiling he had to lie on his back on a scaffolding, with the paint dripping onto his face. He became so stiff that he could only read if he held the paper above his head. Pope Julius kept urging him to hurry, and threatened to have him thrown off the scaffolding if he did not make haste.

Michelangelo was in despair; he was not experienced in fresco painting, and a mould formed on the plaster when the wind blew from the north. The Pope became sorry for him and sent another artist to help him solve his problems.

Michelangelo quarrelled constantly with the Pope and refused to paint gold onto the figures, saying that holy men did not wear it. Julius seems to have understood his temperamental artist because he rewarded him with money and always forgave his outbursts.

The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is three hundred and fifty feet long, and Michelangelo decorated it with nine great panels containing three hundred and forty-three figures. It is a magnificent chronicle of mankind, with scenes from the Old Testament and from mythology.

 Michelangelo working on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

In 1513, Pope Julius died, and Michelangelo thought he might be allowed to finish his tomb. However, a member of the Medici family became Pope Leo X, and sent him instead to Florence to work on the facade of the Medici Church of St. Lorenzo. In vain Michelangelo wept, and said that he was under contract to finish the tomb. He was a sculptor, but Julius had made him become a painter – and now Leo X was forcing him to be an architect.

Michelangelo intended to return to Carrara to select marble for the church, but the quarries were outside Florentine territory and Leo X insisted that he should use marble from the new quarries at Pietra Santa, which belonged to Florence.

Michelangelo protested that this marble was unsuitable, and that there was no road along which to transport it. He had to work with men whom he considered stupid, and to supervise the building of a roadway. Only one of the blocks of marble ever reached Florence, and this lay for years outside the Church of St. Lorenzo. Other blocks remained in the quarries, and some lay on the sea-shore for forty years.

Michelangelo was an unhappy man. He never married, and had to endure constant complaints and demands for money from his family. He suffered from rheumatism and headaches. In 1519, Leonardo da Vinci died, followed by Raphael in 1520, and Michelangelo was left unchallenged as the greatest Florentine artist.

Pope Leo X died suddenly, and yet another member of the Medici family, Clement VII, became Pope. Michelangelo was now called upon to design tombs for two other members of the Medici family who had died young. He began work in 1521, and carved two fine pairs of allegorical figures beneath the statues of Lorenzo and Giulano de Medici. They are his famous '*Dusk and Dawn*' and '*Night and Day*.'

The Medici family also employed another sculptor named Bandinelli, who was much inferior to Michelangelo. His friends persuaded Clement VII that if Bandinelli were to sculpt a figure of Hercules (which Michelangelo was to work on as a companion to his '*David*') Michelangelo would have more time to work on the Medici Tombs. Clement VII gave Bandinelli a block of marble which Michelangelo had chosen for the statue of Hercules. When the block arrived at Florence, the ropes broke and the marble fell into the River Arno. The citizens were indignant at the insult to Michelangelo, and said that the marble had tried to drown itself rather than be carved by Bandinelli.

About this time, the State of Florence became involved in wars, and Michelangelo fled to Venice. He was declared a traitor, but returned and helped with the fortifications of the city.

Michelangelo's brother died in 1528, and his father not long afterwards. Clement VII died too, and work on the Medici Tomb (which is also the Library of St. Lorenzo) came to a standstill. In 1534 Michelangelo left his native city for ever.

 Michelangelo's marble falls into the River Arno.

Michelangelo was now appointed sculptor and architect to the Vatican. From 1536 until 1541 he was engaged on his great altar-piece, '*The Last Judgement*,' on the end wall of the Sistine Chapel. The wall had been prepared for oil painting, but Michelangelo scorned that medium, saying it was only fit for women. He worked on wet plaster with colours mixed with water. While painting, he fell from his scaffolding and hurt his leg. He shut himself in his room, and a Florentine doctor had to climb in through the window to treat him.

'*The Last Judgement*' is an awe-inspiring work, with an avenging Christ despatching sinners to Hell. The Pope's Master of Ceremonies said the work was unsuitable for a chapel. In revenge, Michelangelo painted him in Hell, wearing horns, with a writhing snake round his body.

In 1545, when Michelangelo was seventy years old, the tomb of Julius II was finally completed. He spent the next seven years painting frescoes in the Pauline Chapel of the Vatican. When these were completed, Michelangelo did not touch a paintbrush for the remaining years of his life.

Michelangelo's last years in Rome were spent as an architect. He was made architect in charge of the rebuilding of St. Peter's, a position which Raphael had held thirty years before. Michelangelo worked very hard for seventeen years so that his plans were sufficiently advanced not to be altered after his death. He had a 1/15th scale wooden model constructed of the dome of the cathedral. This model still exists, and we see that it is similar in design to the dome that stands above St. Peter's today.

Michelangelo discusses the plans and wooden model for the dome of St. Peter's.

During his earlier life, Michelangelo was capable of being a violent and vindictive person and was known as '*Il terribile*.' In old age his manner became more gentle, and he was loved by his remaining friends. He had a long-suffering nephew, Lorenzo, who could do nothing right for Michelangelo and who was constantly accused of ingratitude.

In his extreme old age, Michelangelo carved three '*Pietas*,' none of which was finished. In one, which is now in the cathedral at Florence, the figure of the old man, Nicodemus, is thought to be a self-portrait. Michelangelo began to break up this group, as he found flaws in the marble, but it was rescued and completed by other sculptors.

The ancient sculptor often worked late at night, with a candle fixed in a paper circlet round his head. The painter Vasari sent him 40 lbs. of goat-fat candles, which spluttered less than tallow. Michelangelo refused the gift, but the messenger threatened to stick them in the mud outside the house and light them, so the old sculptor was forced to accept the present.

Michelangelo wanted to be buried in Florence, although he had lived in Rome for thirty years. When he died in 1564, his nephew had to steal his coffin to prevent the Pope from burying it in St. Peter's. Lorenzo took the coffin to Florence where a great crowd gathered in front of the Church of Santa Croce for the funeral. Michelangelo's greatness was recognised in his long lifetime and he is highly regarded today.

*Michelangelo works late at night on a '**Pieta**'.*
(A sculpture of the Virgin Mary holding the dead Christ)

Raphael (1483-1520)

Raphael, unlike Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, was not a native of Florence. He was born in 1483 in the hill city of Urbino. His father, Giovanni Santi, was an artist of some reputation, employed by the dukes of Urbino who had a splendid palace containing many Italian and Flemish paintings.

Little is known of Raphael's childhood; his mother died when he was eight, and his father when he was eleven. He must have been quite young when he painted a Madonna and Child on the wall of his father's house. Raphael's father entrusted him to the care of a local artist named Evangelista Mileta, and in 1495 he came into contact with the well-known painter Perugino.

Perugino, like Leonardo da Vinci, had been a pupil of the artist Verrocchio, and was now himself a successful artist. He had schools in Perugia and Florence. We do not know if Raphael lived in Perugino's house, but we know that at the age of seventeen he was Perugino's trained assistant.

We learn that by 1504 Raphael was an accomplished painter. His picture of '*The Marriage of the Virgin*' was painted when he was twenty. It shows considerable mastery, and Raphael proudly signed his name, and the date, on the front of the Temple which dominates the picture. Raphael realised that he must see the magnificent works of art which were being produced in Florence at that time, and in 1504 he moved to that city.

Raphael as a child in the city of Urbino.

Raphael arrived in Florence with a letter of introduction to the Chief Magistrate. In it he was described as a 'discreet and gentle person.' The Chief Magistrate was Pier Soderini, the former Mayor who had criticized the nose of Michelangelo's '*David*.'

As you will have read elsewhere in this book, in 1504 Leonardo da Vinci was painting his '*Mona Lisa*,' and working with Michelangelo on the pictures for the new council chamber. Raphael must have been excited by the paintings he saw in Florence. He was particularly impressed by the soft, simple way in which Leonardo worked, and noticed how he composed his groups of figures into pyramidal and triangular shapes. He was influenced by Michelangelo later on, when he saw his frescoes in Rome. Raphael also met the monk, Fra Bartolommeo, who had been in Venice and who taught him a great deal about colour and perspective. Bartolommeo was one of several Italian artists of the time who were also monks.

Raphael continued to visit Perugia, which is not far from Florence, and he completed some works he had begun there. He was considered 'the best painter in Perugia,' but in Florence he was overshadowed by the genius of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. In Florence, the only commissions which came Raphael's way were for portraits, and for pictures of the Madonna and Child which people kept in their homes for private worship. Raphael was a cautious person, who learned what he could from other artists. In Florence he quietly developed into a distinguished painter.

 Raphael visits the artist-monk, Fra Bartolommeo.

In 1508 Raphael went to Rome. We do not know why he went there, but it has been suggested that he was disappointed at not being asked to finish the frescoes that Leonardo and Michelangelo had begun in the council chamber at Florence. By 1509 he was a salaried court painter in Rome.

Pope Julius II, on whose tomb Michelangelo had worked for so long, commissioned Raphael to decorate a suite of rooms in the Vatican, the Stanza della Segnatura. Rome itself did not produce great artists at that time, but commissioned great works from the painters and sculptors who came to live there.

Raphael was an educated man and had learned Latin before he knew Italian. He went to Rome as a portrait painter, but he soon developed the speed and breadth that made him the great story-teller of painting. Julius II was tired of the pictures that had previously been painted on the walls, and Raphael produced a fine series of fresco decorations. One of the most famous of these is the '*School of Athens*,' which shows his great interest in classical learning. It illustrates his ability to group figures and architecture in a harmonius unity. He shows us the great men of antiquity grouped in a stately interior. The figure of Plato is thought to be Leonardo, and that of Heraclitus may be Michelangelo. Raphael himself appears among a group of astrologers.

 Raphael leaving Florence on his way to Rome.

As a fresco painter, Raphael became second only to Michelangelo, who was engaged at that time on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The artist Vasari tells us that Raphael was taken secretly into the chapel, and that after he had seen Michelangelo's work he changed his style. It is certainly true that his own paintings became bolder in manner and richer in colour.

Raphael gradually became an extremely busy painter. He completed another series of paintings for Pope Julius II in the Stanza Helidorus. These illustrate the military exploits of the soldier-Pope, and show how God had supposedly helped him to win his victories.

As he became busier, Raphael was forced to employ many more assistants. His method was to draw the cartoon (original sketch) himself, and have this traced with a stylus onto wet plaster, which had been prepared by masons. The masons covered only that area on the wall which could be painted in one day, since no colour could be added once the plaster had dried. The various artists then set to work with colours which had already been mixed by other assistants. In this way Raphael was able to complete many frescoes, but when he left too much to his assistants, the finished works were not so good.

In Rome, Raphael developed into a wonderful portrait painter. His fine picture of Pope Leo X was admired by Rembrandt. Raphael shows us people as they really were, and did not work in a stylised manner, as did Rubens and Van Dyck. The Madonnas he painted in Rome are even finer than those he had done in Florence. '*The Sistine Madonna*' is perhaps the greatest of them all.

Fresco painting in progress in the Vatican.

In 1514 Raphael was appointed chief architect of St. Peter's, a position which Michelangelo was to occupy later. The only work actually carried out there by Raphael was the completion of a courtyard, but he became more and more interested in architecture and left much of his painting to his assistants.

In 1515 Raphael was made Safe Keeper of Ancient Inscriptions, which increased his interest in the art of Ancient Greece. He made plans for the reconstruction of the ancient city of Rome. Another position he occupied was Master of Street Planning, and his interest in the layout of cities reminds us of Leonardo da Vinci's. Raphael built himself a fine palace which unfortunately no longer exists. For other people he designed villas in Rome and in the surrounding countryside.

In 1516 Raphael made the sketches for the celebrated tapestries which were to complete the decoration of the Sistine Chapel. The designs, which had to be clear and simple for the weavers, depict the Acts of the Apostles. The work was splendidly woven with much gold thread, though this has blackened with time.

Rubens later found the sketches and brought them to England for King Charles I, where they were cut into strips and used repeatedly in the tapestry workshops. They were restored in the time of William III. Like Leonardo, Raphael was a Universal Man, and designed anything required of him from mosaics to tombs, and from stage-sets to furnishings.

Raphael dreams of restoring the ancient city of Rome to its original splendour.

It is difficult, after four and a half centuries, to gain a clear picture of Raphael as a person. There is no record that he ever married or had children, and we cannot be sure that the stories of his many love-affairs are true. We know that he had a ready wit and was a much loved person. He was known as 'Il Divino,' and we are told that even animals approached him with confidence. Vasari tells us that Raphael never left his house in Rome without a retinue of fifty artists.

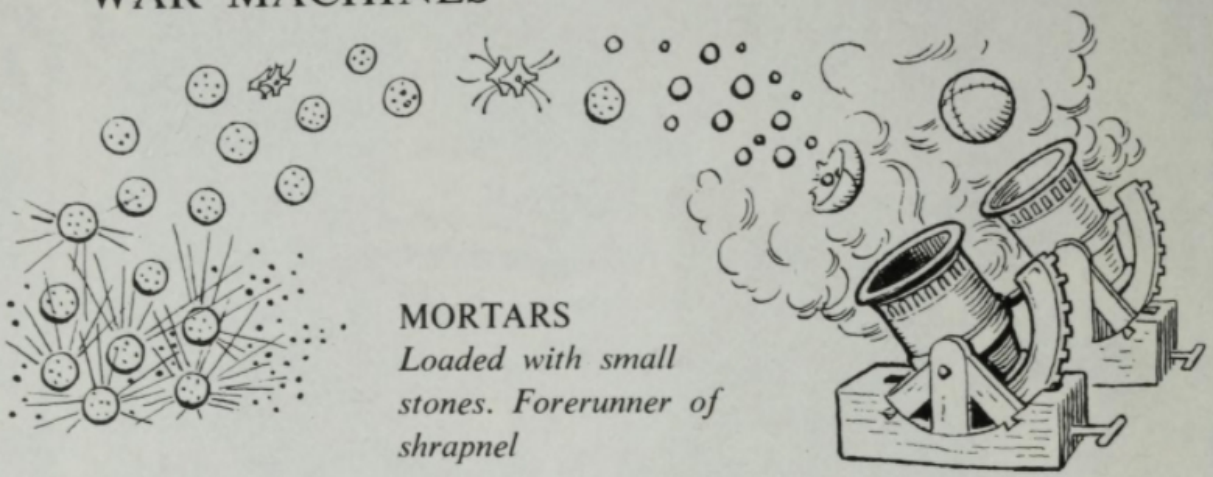
Raphael was a learned man, but he did not write about himself, as did Leonardo and Michelangelo. He was an observer of mankind, and his delight as a painter was to fit his figures into a landscape or architectural setting to make a harmonious unity.

Raphael's last picture, a '*Transfiguration of Christ*,' was unfinished when he died. Indeed, it was hung above his bier as he lay in state. Raphael died of a 'continuous and acute fever' at the early age of thirty-seven. His friends were very grieved, and Pope Leo X said, "Pray for us," when he heard of his death.

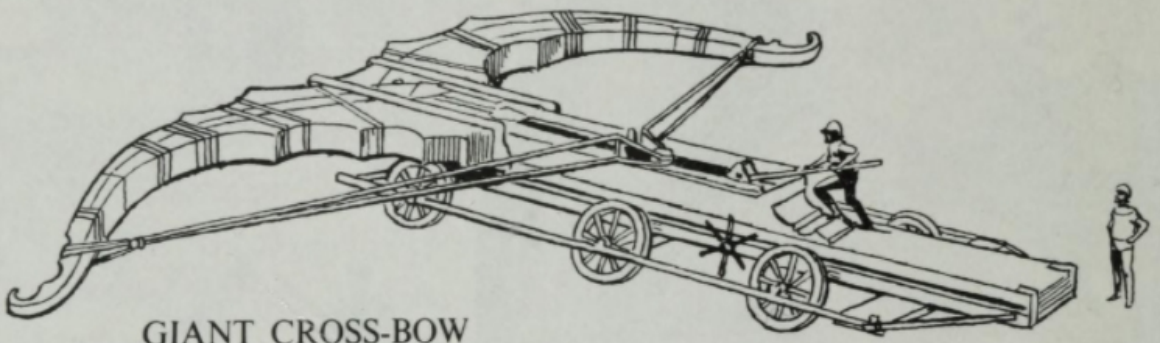
The works of Raphael's followers later became very uninspired and affected, and there was a decline in their quality. No other city has ever had working in it at the same time three such great artists as Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci.

Raphael leaves his palace with a retinue of artists. One of his paintings—'The Madonna of the Chair' stands on an easel.

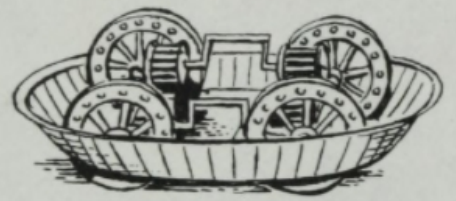
WAR MACHINES



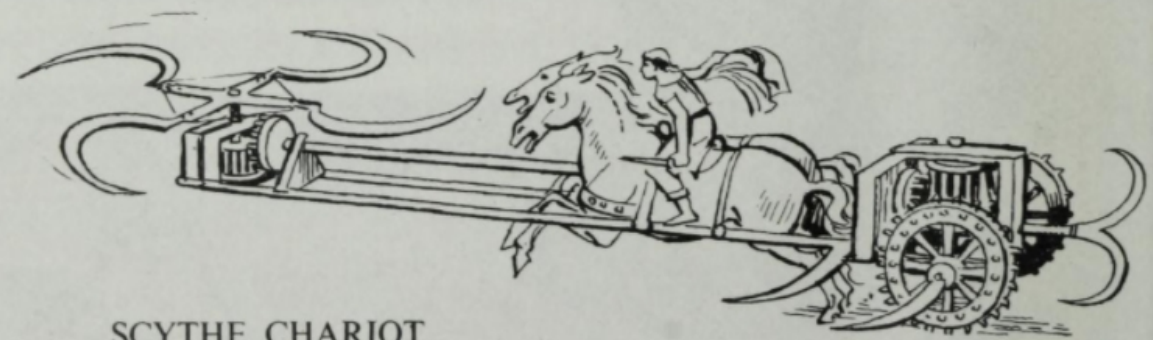
MORTARS
Loaded with small stones. Forerunner of shrapnel



GIANT CROSS-BOW



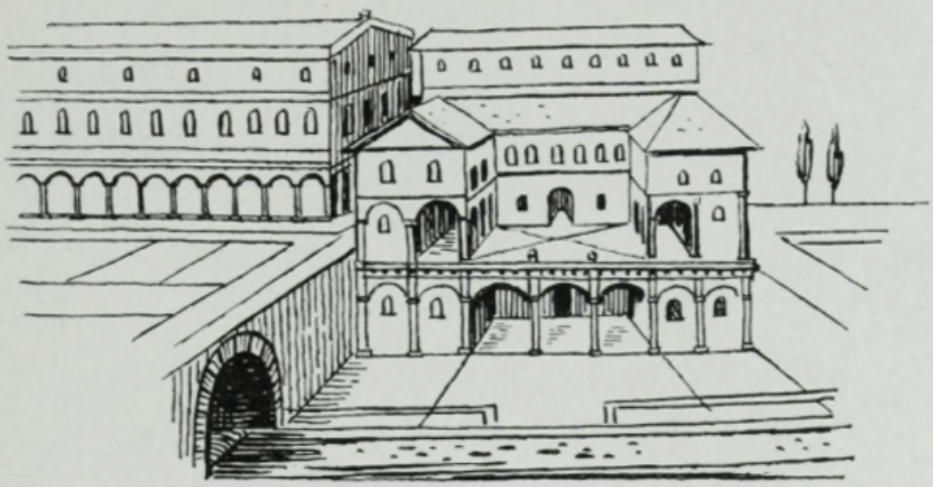
ARMOURED CAR



SCYTHE CHARIOT
Front scythes whirled round by gear-chain from wheels

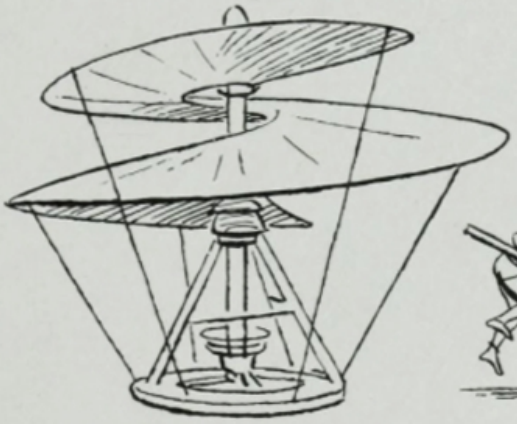
A FEW OF LEONARDO D

PEACE PROJECTS



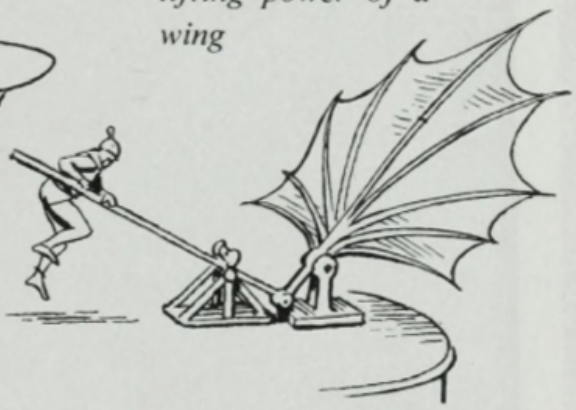
IDEAL CITY *with raised streets, arcades, open squares and rapidly-flowing canal.*

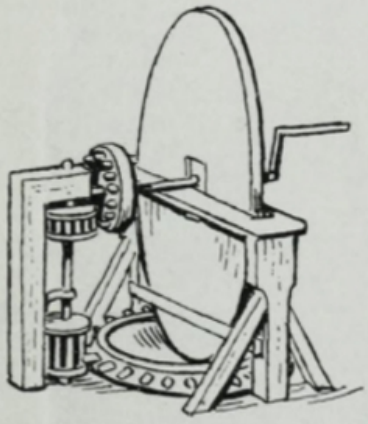
PARACHUTE



HELICOPTER
Anticipating airscrew

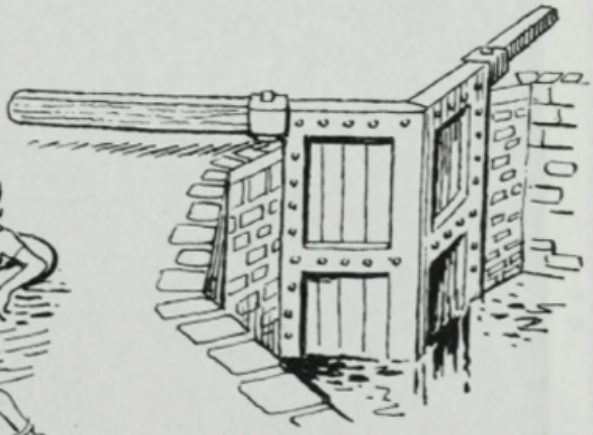
DEVICE *for testing lifting power of a wing*





MACHINE *for grinding concave mirrors*

LIFEBELT



MITRE LOCK-GATES
Angle of gates prevents bursting back. Still used.

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